

## Mr. Warner Your Ex-Wife is Brilliant by Paula Chapter 29 -

### Chapter 29

“**Pointless...** I’ve tried, but there’s no signal, it’s like we’re off the map,” Zane grimaced.

“No way!” Zachary, his disbelief mounting, attempted another call to his father. His reward was a sterile beep of a busy signal, terminating his call.

“Whose bright idea was it to have Willowshire in such a godforsaken place?” Zachary huffed, his foot pounding the dirt floor in a fit of helpless frustration. Cooned in privilege since birth, Zachary was unaccustomed to such bouts of exasperation.

As dusk began to cast long shadows, Zane sighed. “Let’s head back. If the toy is out of our reach, so be it. Mom’s going to be worried sick.”

Zachary gazed at the twilight sky, reluctance etched in his eyes. But he had to agree. “All right, this stupid competition is a letdown anyway. Once we return, I’ll figure out another way to snag that limited-edition robot for Zoe.”

They started their trek home, but soon, darkness descended, and Zachary took a nasty tumble.

Beneath a starless sky at the grand Warner Crest Estate, the otherwise indefatigable Miss Lea paced anxiously. Zachary’s absence gnawed at her patience, leaving an undercurrent of worry in her eyes. In the dim light, she dialed Drake’s number, her voice a shade darker than the night.

Drake’s blood ran cold upon hearing that Annie had whisked Zachary away to a mountain climbing competition. With an unsettling silence hanging in the air after the call, he immediately reached out to Annie.

The phone rang twice, then connected. Before Drake could release the flood of inquiries whirling in his thoughts, he was met with Annie’s cry, filled with melodrama yet infused with authentic worry.

“Drake, Zac...he’s vanished. Zane. He was the one who lured Zac into this mess, and now... Zac’s just disappeared,” she cried.

His brows knitted together tightly, a physical manifestation of his mounting worry. The air around him seemed to drop a **few** degrees, his icy demeanor casting an unspoken warning. "Where are you?" he demanded, his **voice** as sharp as a blade. "Send me your location." With that, **he** ended the call. Rising from his desk, Drake cut a chilling figure as he swept out of the office, his mind set **on** one goal to find Zachary.

**Across** town, Jane returned home from her busy workday, expecting to find her son, Zane. Instead, she was greeted by the sound of **Zoe** immersed in play, his laughter echoing in **the empty house**.

"Zoe, **where's** your brother?" **she inquired**, her tone **light**. Recalling the time Zane **had ventured** out alone **to** purchase **ice** cream, she felt no immediate alarm, choosing instead **to engage Zoe in conversation**.

"**He** went to win **a robot for me in some competition**," **Zoe** answered, setting **his toy** aside **and** lifting his **eyes** to meet his **mother's**. **His** young forehead wrinkled **in** concern as he **added**, "**But he's** been away **for too long, Mommy**."

Jane's heart **leaped** into her **throat**. The mirthful **chime of Zoe's voice could n't** mask the reality **that** Zane had **been** absent for an **entire** day **and had** ventured out alone. A tidal wave **of** anxiety swept **over** her.

Without a moment's hesitation, she dialed **Jasper**, her words quick and clear, asking **him to** find out **more** about this mysterious competition Zane was participating in.

Armed with the details she received, Jane grabbed her coat, a resolute expression on her face. With one last look **at** the rapidly darkening night sky, she rushed out, her mind racing with what she might find.

As Jane pulled up, the car's headlights cut through the dusky evening to reveal a tableau straight out of a tragedy. A woman of striking beauty draped across a man's solid frame, her body wracked with sobs.

"Drake, I...I should have stopped him. Zac...if I knew...I would never have let him join that competition." The woman, Annie, was laying blame thick and heavy on an innocent party. "It's all Zane's fault. If not for him, Zac wouldn't be lost."

Hearing her lay all the blame on a mere child, Zane, Jane's usually warm eyes frosted over. The words Annie spoke hung heavy in the air, painting her in a distasteful light.

"If you have so much energy to shed tears here," Jane retorted icily, "Why not direct it into something useful, like searching the mountain?"

At Jane's sudden appearance, Drake, the tall figure with Annie, stiffened. His comforting hold on Annie went slack, as if her presence was a surprise. His deep-set eyes met hers, curiosity lighting them up. His lips parted as if to question her, but Jane was already in motion, striding toward the mountain.

"Jane, wait! I've dispatched search teams... Zac's disappearance has me rattled too."

"I'm sure it does. Go home, Drake. I'll join the search for Zac."

With those words, Jane left no room for argument. She pressed forward, leaving Drake with no choice but to follow. His long strides soon swallowed the distance she had put between them.

As the duo disappeared into the inky night, Annie was left behind. Her worry twisted into a scowl, and her eyes blazed with frustration and a hint of something darker.

"Jane...always meddling." She spat out **the** words **like** a bitter pill, her heart churning with a dangerous mix of fear and resentment. A malicious gleam sparked in **her eyes**. "**We'll** see who has the last laugh when Zachary is gone, and she's carrying Drake's child." She smirked, a cold promise of things to come.

Inside the **cave**, a compact figure **huddled** over a collection of **hay** and **twigs**, little fingers laboriously at work. This was Zane, **whose** childhood innocence was eclipsed **by dire circumstances**.

**Not** far away, **Zachary grimaced**, his brow slick **with sweat**, but he bit back **any sounds of discomfort**. The throbbing pain in his leg made it clear – their misadventure—had gone **awry**.

"Zane, I...I'm sorry." **His voice, choked with guilt**, echoed off the **cold**, damp cave walls. "**I dragged you into this mess.**"

**Zachary** had always **been doted** on, given his lineage and charms. So, an apology **from him**

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**was** a rarity that caught **Zane off-guard**.

**“It’s** not your fault. **We just** hit a streak **of** rotten **luck,**” Zane murmured, his tiny hands continuing their **task** with the primitive fire-making tools.

Though **just** a five-year-old, **his** calm was commendable. But his inexperience with the wild **was** evident; everything he knew, he had gleaned from books and videos. The reality of applying it, however, was proving more challenging than he anticipated.

Suddenly, an eerie howl sliced through the night, its chilling tone reverberating through the cave, seizing them with terror.

“Zane, that...that sounded like a wolf,” Zachary whispered, his blue eyes wide with fear.

“Don’t be ridiculous. We’re not deep enough in the woods for wolves,” Zane retorted, a forced calm in his voice, despite the creeping fear clawing at his heart.

His reassurance wavered when Zachary mentioned a news piece about an escaped wolf from a local zoo in Willowshire, close to their Pine Ridge location. The wolf remained at large.

The implications were dire. A run-in with a wolf would spell disaster for them.

Zachary crawled over to Zane, his wince audible, whispering, “Zane, if...if a wolf does show up, I’ll distract it. You need to run.”

Zane’s reply was silence, the only sound in the cave being the frenzied scraping of the fire-making tools.

The flame that finally sprouted brought an ethereal glow to the cave, startling something outside. A rustle of leaves echoed in the cave before silence fell again.

Looking at Zane, face smeared with soot, an unfamiliar sense of admiration flooded Zachary. "Zane, you...you did it. Good job!"

As Zane heard the praise, his small face lit up. "Well, if you want to learn, just call me brother, and I'll teach you."

Zachary's response was a snort of derision. Call Zane 'brother'? That would muddle the hierarchy, and possibly the blooming interest he had in their lovely teacher.

"Calling me brother won't make you lose anything. I can protect you," Zane jested, intrigued by the idea of Zachary addressing him as an elder.

"Forget it," came Zachary's haughty response, a stubborn tilt to his chin.

A **sudden rustling** outside the cave jolted them out of their banter, both of them on high alert once again.

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